

Minutes:

Stowe Electric Commissioners' Meeting
January 27, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. at Town of Stowe Electric Conference Room

Present:

BOARD MEMBERS: Richard ("Dick") Marron, Chairman (via Zoom); Larry Lackey, Vice-Chairman (via Zoom), Heidi Scheuermann, Commissioner (via Zoom)

STAFF: Ellen Burt, General Manager; David Kresock, Director of Operations; Kristin Winer, Controller; Mike Lazorchak, Manager of Regulatory Compliance (via Zoom); Lily Burgess, Clerk of the Board

Dick called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Approval of the December 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes

On motion made and seconded, the minutes of December 16th were approved.

Financial Reports

November Financial Reports: SED ended November with \$1.1M in net income, which is \$328,000 (40%) above the 2020 straight-line YTD budget, and a \$186K decrease in total net income from October. Decreased electric sales have contributed to a 10% decrease to the bottom line of \$1.1M. Fortunately, this revenue decrease has been offset by decreased purchase power costs (energy and transmission). Distribution expenses were \$122K (10%) less than budget due to project and line-clearing deferrals, purchasing limitations and seasonality. Spending however is continuing for purchases and maintenance projects, including several of significant cost. SED will continue to see increases through the end of the year as invoices are received.

January 2021 Cash Flow Forecast: The results of the model with all current assumptions show that SED is not expected to experience cash flow challenges in 2021, especially with some lost commercial revenue from 2020 expected to return, as vaccines for COVID-19 are distributed.

Operations Report

It has been a fairly quiet month due to the holidays and the crews' staggered schedules. Contract work has slowed down considerably. In 2020, 451 work orders were initiated, and 421 were completed. SED received a total of 578 DigSafe: line crews located 135 underground primaries, 46 secondaries, 325 locations had no underground and 65 were

outside of SED's service territory. During 2020, SED experienced 114 outages. Although there was a slight increase in the total number of outages, SED's reliability indices show a significant improvement over 2019 due to increased focus on tree trimming and system maintenance as reflected by company-initiated outages. With additional focus on increased tree trimming efforts on the main distribution and transmission lines, SED has ended the year with only half the outages caused by trees compared to last year. Stowe, like the rest of Vermont, continues to see a rising trend in extreme weather events throughout the year.

Referring to SED's current staggered crew schedule, Larry inquired what the larger distribution utilities were doing to protect the safety of their linemen. David stated that there is not much the smaller utilities with very few linemen can do. He said that he heard that GMP is still rotating as well, with people in and out of the garage at certain times trying to keep people separated as much as possible to not cross-contaminate. He said that is why SED initially decided to stagger crews, to safeguard that SED not run out of "healthy" guys.

Ellen said she talked with Dan Weston at WEC and they have half the crew come in at 7 a.m. and the other half at 8 a.m. Ellen said she too heard that GMP linemen are working and crews are coming in at different times. Dick then asked if SED linemen were still at half on/half off. Ellen confirmed that schedule. Dick then stated that starting staggered at 7 and 8 is a totally logical thing to do and that he would even suggest that SED let the linemen that come in at 7 go home at 2, and the linemen that come in at 8 leave at 3. That would get crews working, since they cannot work remotely.

Dick said he wants to protect the people, and he understands that even though SED has a big garage, they still need to keep it staggered, ride in separate vehicles. Larry agreed that there should be a way to have a staggered schedule with different start and finish.

Regulatory Report

Case 20-0703-PET – Moratorium on Involuntary Disconnections: The PUC reinstated the moratorium on involuntary disconnections until March 31, 2021.

Arrearages Program: The Distribution Utilities (DUs) sent several letters to the State Legislature and the Federal Representatives asking for additional funding help cover the arrearages.

Workshops and Community Outreach:

SED continues to promote Tier III incentives and will close out 2020 on February 15, 2021. SED received twelve qualifying rebates for cold climate heat pumps.

Other Business

The Board scheduled the next Commissioners' meeting for February 24th at 8:30 a.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:08 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Lily Burgess
Clerk of the Board